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ABSTRACT

Terrorists seek recognition for their cause by using violence to create public fear which will force the government into repressive counter-measures. The mass media play a vital role in this strategy. News reports of terrorism may magnify the climate of fear, thereby augmenting the public's overreaction. Moreover, broadcast of terrorist acts may enhance terrorism as a technique for social change. Experts call this the "contagion effect," when large amounts of terrorist publicity increase the frequency and intensity of similar terrorist acts. The recent Iran crisis indicates the media's unwillingness to reduce their emphasis on coverage of terrorism. Government control of media news content is an unacceptable alternative, but the media must accept responsibility for self-regulation or risk government censorship brought about by public panic at escalating terrorism. A balanced solution to the problems engendered by allowing terrorists access to the media includes greater cooperation between the media and law enforcement agencies, and more "proportioned" coverage of terrorist acts. Researchers may take an active role in defining approaches to terrorist coverage that will best minimize public fear while assuring that the public remains well informed. (Author/HTH)

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The Mass Media Role in Terrorist Campaigns

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THE MASS MEDIA ROLE IN TERRORIST CAMPAIGNS

> "No community, however law abiding and free from ordinary crime, can hope to enjoy immunity from terroristic activity and its consequences."(34)

This final conclusion of the United States Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism (1976) summarized the justification for studying the growing problem of terrorism in the United States. The recent crisis in Iran convinced most Americans that terrorists pose a real threat to the security of this nation. During the crisis, it was the responsibility of the mass media to keep the public informed and to transmit messages between the involved governments. The Palestinian Liberation Organization achieved worldwide recognition after their attack on the Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics; millions watched the drama unfold on television. During Patty Hearst's ordeal, the media focused national attention on her and upon the socio-political convictions of her captors. These examples illustrate the integral role that the mass media play in a crisis of violence.

Historically, the role of the media in reporting terror crime was rarely questioned. The general assumption was that the public had a right to know and the press had a right to publish news about such events. With the advent of electronic news-gathering equipment (ENG) capable of transmitting picture and sound instantly from any part of the globe, the media are caught between reporting the news and disseminating terrorist propaganda. Law enforcement officials and experts on terrorism claim that the publicity associated with a terrorist act increases the likelihood of other groups adopting a similar strategy.(22)

The media are asked to balance the public's 'right to know' against

the public's 'right to security', yet there is no clear demarcation point where publicity becomes excessive. Therefore, the media decisions to cover or not cover terror incidents are called irresponsible by some and repressive by others. Only by investigating the role of the media, in the strategy of terrorism, can a balanced solution be found.

THE STRATEGY OF TERRORISM

The goals of terrorists generally involve social change.[23] The type of change may vary from seeking a new form of government to better prison conditions. Most terrorists are ends oriented; they feel the rightness of their cause justifies any action taken to achieve the goals. In many cases, the terrorists first sought to achieve change through normal channels before turning to violence, but they were stifled by bureaucracy or the minority appeal of their cause.[8,13] It is under these conditions that the would-be terrorist develops a strategy to force social or political change.

Publicity as a Strategy

The terrorists' two worst enemies are ignorance and apathy. In order to win vital support, they must communicate their cause to potential supporters. Terrorists rightly assume that they must have publicity to be successful.[12]

Since terrorists feel they have exhausted all direct channels of communication to the government, they turn to the people for support. Terrorists believe that the public will sympathize with their cause because they were driven to such desperate acts. They assume that the public will acknowledge the risks taken by the terrorists as denoting a worthy cause.[27]

Terrorists also seek public sympathy through pseudo-martyrdom. If the government reacts to terrorism by repressing it, then the terrorists may claim to be oppressed. Thus, the government appears to be the enemy; and the terrorist appears to be a persecuted minority. Terrorists may also seek repression to generate a siege mentality in a country. The populace will then be more amenable to social or political transformation and revolution.(9)

The terrorists' need for publicity is not unlike that of any other political campaigns. However, their limited resources force them to acquire access to mass communication channels by other means. The use of violence assures terrorists the access they require.

Violence as a Tactic

The use or threat of violence distinguishes terrorism from other, more mundane, attempts at change. Contrary to popular belief, the terrorists rationally choose to use violence in their fight for their cause.(16,29) Violence best assures the success of the publicity campaign because it insures attention by the media and therefore the public.

The sensational nature of deliberate, yet random, murder assures the terrorist of media coverage because it is so contrary to social norms; nobody kills another anonymously or indiscriminately.(27) Such violence bears a strong resemblance to the sort found during times of war and is thus definitionally 'news.' The commercially competitive nature of the media and the scoop-mentality of its newsgatherers guarantees that the public will be kept informed of the terrorists' exploits.

The Iranian hostage crisis provides an example of how terrorists exploit the media's natural tendency to cover spectacular and violent news. The

average person could follow the events in Iran via the morning news, the noon news, the evening news, the late news, special news breaks, every major news magazine and newspaper, and in late night TV news specials, devoted exclusively to the subject. This is not to say that this act of terrorism was not news, for it obviously was. But the media, in their agenda-setting role, may have enhanced the newsworthiness of the takeover and probably contributed to the anti-Iranian hysteria which swept the U.S. in November and December of 1979. One State Department official called the whole affair a "tele-crisis," bespeaking television's role in the terrorist event.(33)

The use of violence as a tactic in the terrorists' publicity campaign serves other vital functions in the advancement of their cause. Terrorism increases public fear as a result of the random nature of the acts and the government's seeming inability to stop them. It is during this time of crisis, while the public is demanding that action be taken, that the government is most likely to over-react to the terrorist threat.(30)

As was noted earlier, the terrorists seek to establish government repression. When such repression occurs, it is rarely limited to just the terrorists; many innocent persons are also affected by government crackdowns. Thus, to oppress the terrorist is also to oppress the populace to some degree. Airport screening procedures illustrate this dilemma. If terrorism escalates, then government reactions are likely to become extreme. Repression tends to trigger more terrorism and a cycle is established which insures that either the terrorist will produce anarchy or the government will fall into tyranny.(24) In either case, the public is the loser.

The Process of Terrorism

In most cases, the public accepts the initial limitations upon their freedom in order to eradicate terrorism. They are unaware that such governmental repression is part of the strategy of terrorism.

Terrorists understand the public mentality and the government reactions to it. Thus, the terrorists' strategy is to topple the government from the inside, by dissolving the popular trust which a democratic government must have.

This is what occurred in Uruguay. The Tupamaro terrorists continued to escalate their violence until the public outcry forced the government to take extreme and repressive counter-measures. While this brought about the demise of the Tupamaros, the draconian procedures used also destroyed the democratic government in Uruguay.(6)

The media play a vital role in the process of terrorism by communicating the violent acts to the public. It is ultimately the reporting of such acts which enhances the terrorists' threat upon society. The terrorists could not function without the media; and, in many ways, the media must rely on 'manufactured' news. Wittingly or not, the media serve as a vital link in transferring the terrorist from a resourceless guerrilla in the bush to a freedom fighter on the world stage of television.(5)

SYMBIOSIS: THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN TERRORISM

Terrorism is a crime of publicity. Whether they are Croatians on a plane from La Guardia or South Moloccans on a train in Holland, terrorists see themselves as freedom fighters who have no alternative but violence.

Terrorists do not seek violence as an end in itself; "they want alot of people watching, and alot of people listening, not alot of people dead."(18) The Iranians recognized that making pleas at the U.N. or via their embassy in Washington were not going to win them redress against the former Shah; they had to take their case before the American people. The hostage taking provided them the needed access to the news media, and thus a platform for airing their grievances.

By reporting terrorists' activities, the media often act as an accomplice to the terrorist. Without publicity, there is no terror in terrorism. Publicity is the ultimate victory for the terrorist. Terrorism is an event made-to-order for the mass media because it is real life drama at its most exciting point. Terrorism is theater for television; it is entertainment. In planning, the terrorists virtually choreograph their production for the six o'clock news.(12) In a society which mistakenly believes that "headlines denote power," the terrorist seeks status recognition, the media confers it, and the people believe it.(21)

As if the inherent violence of a terrorist act were not enough, the media often sensationalize the episode for public consumption. This, in turn, tends to enhance the terrorists climate of fear. "Terrorists are in the business of manipulating public opinions and reactions; the media have the power to make the terrorist look like a saint or like Frankenstein."(12)

Beyond the problem of enhancing the immediate terrorist threat, the media may be creating larger problems by projecting terrorism as a successful strategy (for getting publicity, if nothing else). On the assumption that nothing succeeds like success, it is feared that the incidence of terrorism escalates with the publicity afforded to it.

The Contagion Hypothesis

Most theorists familiar with the controversy regarding television violence will recognize its parallel in terrorist theory: continued display of terrorism in the media will generally result in more terrorism of a similar nature. While this contagion hypothesis has not been attributed to any one author, largely because little empirical research has been conducted to verify its existence, many authors conclude that were there to be no special emphasis on terrorism by the media, there would be no terrorism.(9)

Amy Sands Redlick explained the hypothesis like this:

> The media aids in escalating terrorism by enhancing the diffusion of information between formerly isolated groups and causes. The motivations of one terrorist group may now inspire other groups to fight against repression. This is especially true when terrorism appears to be successful in gaining concessions--including publicity.(28)

The global nature of terrorism and the media's ability to report an event from anywhere on earth, enable one to see successful displays of terror-violence on almost any given day. Thus, the revolution, in all its various forms and causes, is kept alive by mutual inspiration via the media.

The mass media may also escalate the violent intensity of terrorism. As terrorist groups watch one another on television, they tend to mimic successful para-military techniques. If one group uses a bomb in a locker at La Guardia airport, another is likely to try a similar tactic in Los Angeles, Miami, or Dallas. Moreover, as violence increases and the media's coverage intensifies, the public becomes anesthetized to its effect.(3) Therefore, the terrorists must increase the level of their violence in order to assure strong reactions from the public and the government. Terrorists

compete with one another, with criminals, with wars, and with fictionalized and fantasized violence for the attention of the audience. This may result in fearsome consequences if a terrorist group is forced to escalate from crude conventional weaponry into chemical, biological or nuclear threats.

The diffusion of terrorism via the media and the subsequent increases in terrorist incidents, are consistent with both operant conditioning and observational learning theory.(8) Terrorists learn to continue terrorizing by their own successes, especially in achieving publicity; and by watching the success of others. The result of this publicity is a 'contagion effect'; that is, terrorism begets terrorism.

While there is little empirical research to confirm the existence of the contagion effect, content-analytic studies as well as psychological research on both terrorists and violence in general lend support to the notion that publicizing terrorism increases the frequency and intensity of terrorist acts. This criticism, however, underscores the need for research on the mediated effects of terrorism on society. Policy makers cannot procede strictly on educated guesswork. The necessity of working quickly to resolve the question of media effects was emphasized by Yonah Alexander, Director of the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism at S.U.N.Y.:

> Typical reporting of a terrorist event in the U.S. might reach an audience of approximately 40 million persons....If we consider that just one-tenth of one percent of the audience were borderline psychopaths, that would be forty thousand potential maniacs. If we took one thousandth of one percent, we've still got four hundred possible terrorists. If we took one one-hundred thousandth of one percent, we would still have the four persons that are necessary to carry out the typical terrorist episode.(2)

Attempting to control contagion is a delicate question of balancing rights. Democratic governments face a dilemma between prior restraint on the media and protecting the citizenry against terrorism.

GOVERNMENT OPTIONS TO CONTROL TERRORISM

The government does not have a 'non-reactive' option. Failing to take visible steps to erradicate a terrorist threat would result in magnifying the public's fears. Terrorists would intensify their operations to force the government into the reaction, over-reaction, repression cycle. This means more violence, more fear, more pressure on the government from the public, until action is taken.

The Reactive Approach

Current law enforcement efforts to halt terrorism can best be described as impotent. "No single department or agency of the U.S. government is charged with dealing with terrorism. A serious threat would find the government woefully unprepared to assess and cope with the terrorists."(34) The Privacy Acts, the Freedom of Information Act, the CIA and FBI reforms, all serve to reduce the government's ability to anticipate and control terrorism.

The reactive approach to terrorism is a direct result of government's lack of control:

> "Society will tolerate terrorism as long as it is no more than a nuisance. Once it spreads and becomes a real danger, the authorities are no longer blamed for disregarding rights in their struggle against it. On the contrary, the cry goes up for more repressive measures, irrespective of the price which must be paid in liberties."(21)

The outrage which eventually arises over terrorism pressures the government into increasing the nation's security and taking measures to eliminate the threat <u>at all costs</u>.

Overreaction of this sort is precisely what the terrorist is seeking. In this condition, the government is made to look even more unprepared to

protect its citizens than it really is. The media displays terrorism with all the dramatic elements of any fictionalized crime show. Terrorists appear to have all the advantages, especially since they are not constrained to act within the law as are the police. As in a crime drama, the media spends far more time covering the crime and the criminal than depicting the epilogue when the terrorist is apprehended and the show is over. This often tends to leave the viewer with the overall impression that the government was unable to cope with the threat.(13)

The repercussions of a public paralyzed by fear are especially salient to the mass media. Media coverage of terrorists acts may be responsible for the public's heightened fear and outrage, albeit unintentionally. Consequently the media may be the first target of the public in an attempt to disarm the terrorists. Despite the threat to their own autonomy, the media continue to emphasize terrorism in their news reports, as if their ratings depended on it.

Media Self-Regulation

The question of whether the media will self-regulate is probably best answered by examining their behavior during a crisis. The media may aid terrorist organizations, directly, by the very presence of equipment and personnel. In the competitive attempt to 'get the whole story' and be the first to do so, reporters may try to contact the terrorists. This may tie-up the phone lines and prevent the negotiators from communicating with the terrorists. News hounds may often unwittingly increase the pressure on the situation by asking questions of the terrorist regarding deadlines or the survival probabilities of the hostages. Similar pressure may be applied to the general conditions when media reports demoralize the public, or when government officials are cornered on their strategy regarding the situation.

The media may also serve as the surveillance arm of the terrorists. Reports are frequently given on the strategy and tactics of the government security forces; this may even include false immunity offers or planned ambushes. In some instances, cameramen focus ENG equipment on the hidden positions of police marksmen stationed to attack the terrorists should they exit the building under seige.

In March of 1977, the Hanafi Muslims took control of the B'nai Brith building in Washington, D.C. One reporter saw a basket being lifted by rope to the fifth floor where some people had evaded being taken hostage, but were still trapped in the building, unknown to the terrorists. News reports of the incident were monitored by the Muslims and the hiding people were discovered. Another reporter referred to Khaalis, the leader, as a Black Muslim. Khaalis, whose family were murdered by Black Muslims, flew into a rage and threatened to kill every one of the hostages in retaliation for the reporter's words. The police had the reporter issue an apology and Khaalis was pacified. Another reporter reported that what appeared to be "boxes of ammunition" were being taken to the building in preparation for an assault. It was fortunate that the terrorists did not hear this report, especially since the boxes turned out to be food for the hostages.

It is clear that the media tendency to exaggerate for the audiences benefit can be most dangerous. In a tragic case, the media reported that the pilot of a hijacked plane was relaying vital intelligence information to the FBI under the guise of his normal radio transmissions with a flight control tower. When the terrorists discovered the pilot's actions, via a local radio stations news broadcast, they executed him.(2)

In each of these cases, the reporter's defense was based on a free press and the public's right to know. The media feel compelled by the first amendment to report all they can discover and to let the public determine the usefulness or social value of the information. "TV is show business, and in trying to adapt itself to this strange new world, news has taken on some of the elements of show business. This fact of life may well lead the news director to choose the more entertaining item over the more informative."(32) "TV news has an inherent entertainment bias which causes much important information to be left out or oversimplified in favor of audience building gimmicks or good film."(26)

The media's taste for the sensational can be seen in the Kiritis episode, in Indianapolis, during February of 1977. Anthony Kiritis held a bank loan officer for more than 60 hours with a shotgun tied to the hostage's neck. Kiritis' finger was wired to the trigger of the gun. When Kiritis heard that the media was making him look crazy, he demanded and received airtime. Every local station covered Kiritis' demented rantings. Only one station opted to shut down its transmissions when the terrorist's language became obscene and it looked as though he was going to blow the hostage's head off in front of a half million viewers.

The media consistently espouse the philosophy of the public's right to know. Sometimes it appears that they are merely being opportunistic in relation to their competitors. Terrorism is exciting, and excitement sells. It seems far more probable that the standard most publishers and broadcasters hold highest is free enterprise not free press.(17) The probability of media self-regulation is small. While some news organizations, (AP, UPI, NBC, and CBS) have established guidelines for reporting terrorism, much discretion is

still left to the individual reporter and editor. There is no enforcement against a violation of the guidelines, nor any penalty for such a transgression. The pressures of industry competition assure that one or another news organizations will cover any given terrorist event to excess, and that the others will be forced into similar coverage or face the prospect of losing subscribers or viewers to the competition.

An example of this self-regulatory breakdown occurred during the Iran crisis when NBC agreed to the Iranian students' terms for broadcasting an interview with the hostage Gallegos. CBS and ABC both refused to accept the Iranian prerequisites. NBC was heavily criticized by its fellow media competitors for allowing itself to be 'used' by the terrorists as a podium for propaganda. In the end, however, every major newspaper and the other television networks used all or part of that interview in their own news reports.

CBS underwent the same criticism when it interviewed Ayatollah Khomeni. The result was the same; the other networks and the newspapers used the information CBS received as part of their own coverage of the 'tele-crisis'. Thus, in the first test since the guidelines were established, media self-regulation failed.

The media inherently oppose any form of government regulation over their programming or editorial content. Few persons in the business of transmitting news are willing to admit the causal influence their reports may have on enhancing the terrorist position. The media are unwilling to accept the fact that they are an integral part of the terrorist's strategy of publicity and violence; reporters prefer to see themselves as innocent bystanders presenting the news as it happens, not as participants in that news.(20)

Because of the media's inability to regulate themselves, it is often proposed that limits should be placed on their right to disseminate certain information about terrorist incidents. These proposals include: banning live coverage, prohibiting all reporting on terrorism, or merely preventing the mention of the terrorist names, group names, or causes.

Government Control of the Media

All of the proposals to restrict media coverage of terrorism suffer from the same fatal flaws. First, in an abstract sense, such restrictions violate constitutional protections to a free press and the public's right to know. While some authors would conclude that, when balanced, life must be a paramount value over liberty,(10) most believe that government suppression of information about terrorism is a victory for the terrorists seeking repression.(15)

Second, rumors would be far worse than the truth. Even if it were possible to keep most of the information regarding terrorism from the public, it would not be possible to keep them totally ignorant. The result would be incessant rumors, and distorted reports of what was actually happening. A serious crisis in governmental confidence and media credibility would develop, and this would most likely encourage governmental over-reaction in order to win back popular support. In the long run this also constitutes a victory for the terrorist.(12)

Third, governmental suppression establishes a unique precedent for repression which may eventually be generalized to include any dissent against the approved governmental positions. This is prior restraint and censorship in its most dangerous and destructive form. Terrorism is almost nonexistent in most authoritarian regimes which practice news control, but so is legitimate criticism of the government.(9)

Finally, terrorists would not likely accept a move which eliminated their forum for communication. A restriction on reporting terrorist incidents might result in the terrorists escalating their activities until they can no longer be covered up or ignored. It would be irresponsible in the extreme to believe that it was in the public's best interest to attempt hiding the facts. They would demand to know the perpetrators and motives behind a terrorist attack of any magnitude.

Each of these reasons explains how the ultimate victory belongs to the terrorist when a society over-reacts and forsakes its democratic rights and ideals to defend itself against a far weaker opponent. This was the mistake made by the Uruguayan government. Despite governmental efforts to control terrorism within legal limits, the Tupamaros won the psychological battle for the minds of the people via the media. The government finally enacted many repressive measures designed to root out terrorism including a ban on media reports of such incidents. Although the Tupamaros were eliminated the showcase democracy which Uruguay displayed for its socialist and communist neighbors was also a casualty in the war against terrorism.

In America, it seems likely that any attempt to silence the media would not pass constitutional scrutiny, nor would it be successfully enforced were it ruled constitutional.(31) Only if the government and populace were reacting violently in a time of terrorist-induced crisis could such measures as media censorship be accepted and enforced.

A balanced solution to the problem of the media inspired terrorism lies in preventing the government and its constituency from reacting to terror violence in a crisis mentality. It is the media's responsibility to provide a climate of rationality, not sensationalism.

A BALANCED SOLUTION

A balanced solution to terrorism calls for the recognition of terrorism as only a minor threat to the status quo. "Terrorism is a weapon of the weak;"[15] even the terrorists recognize that they fight a losing battle if they try to overwhelm the state. Terrorism succeeds only when the public becomes afraid or outraged and demands action by the government. Terrorism, alone, cannot destroy the government of any country; the terrorists must have the help of an incensed and frightened public.

The actual threat which terrorism poses to society is relatively small. Terrorists are not motivated to kill large numbers of people indiscriminately. The campaign of terror is designed to attract an audience, not alienate one.[16] Thus, terrorists are unlikely to use a nuclear bomb or a vial of deadly poison unless they believed there is no other way to obtain public attention. It is difficult to convince the public and policymakers that fear is their own worst enemy during the midst of such a crisis. The war on terrorism must therefore begin by recognizing the terrorists' goals and strategies including reactions based on fear. In this respect, the mass media play their most vital role in controlling the ultimate success or failure of terrorism.

Media Cooperation

The first solution offered by most experts on terrorism is that the media must reconsider their role as the 'fourth estate.' Media cooperation with legal authorities while reporting terrorist incidents would greatly improve relations between both of these vital agencies. Neither the police nor the media can function effectively without cooperation. A responsible

media could aid the negotiators by limiting the involvement of reporters into the actual process of the events.

The police could aid the media by providing complete and accurate information. It would be far more effective to seek media cooperation in toning down certain aspects of the terror episode; the media should be fully informed on the condition so that they wait until after the crisis has ebbed before relating the entire story.(9)

The advantage to greater cooperation between media and government is clear. It avoids the necessity of governmental exercise of prior restraint. By exercising more responsible judgment regarding the effect of their messages on the public, there is no need to regulate the media into submission. By recognizing the public's right to know, the government becomes a media ally, and terrorists become their common enemy. The societal goal is no longer to shield the public or to inform the public, but rather to defeat the terrorist.

Media Perspective

Because the portrayal of terrorism often determines the public reaction to the incident, the media must provide a balanced and unsensationalized account of the events. The media can no longer afford to exaggerate the drama of terrorism for the purpose of saleability; it is necessary for the media to rise above the problems engendered by competition and profits.

The media need to place terrorism in its societal context as a minimal threat to health and well-being. This s easier said than done. It is difficult to define just exactly what is the proper perspective for the media to take on terrorism. Most attempts to define the media role are too vague to be useful. For example, one expert notes:

> "The media should report objectively, accurately and credibly about terrorist acts lest the public panic and lose trust and confidence in both the media and the government."(i)

M. Cherif Bassiouni, Dean of the International Institute for Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences has made these suggestions:

> The media should portray terrorism with emphasis that: 1) social values are contrary to such acts; 2) law enforcement officers operate under handicaps--they are not willing to destroy as much as is necessary to achieve their goals, they are on the defense, while the terrorist has the advantage of being the offense--meaning that the police must anticipate the terrorists' moves; 3) terrorism is an attack on the population at-large and, as such it is nearly impossible to prevent in the first place, given its random nature; 4) the claims of the terrorists are not widely accepted, or else their holders would have utilized other means to work for social or political transformation, and therefore the values of such views is placed in question rather than enhanced; 5) the risks taken by terrorists are also being taken by the law enforcement officials; 6) invariably, terrorism is the practice of small groups whose potential for drama far exceeds their potential for genuine harm, and that fewer people are harmed by terrorists than by such hazards as common crime, auto accidents and major disease; 7) society is neither powerless nor helpless, but rather it acts within a certain legal framework which the terrorist does not; 8) society cannot be free if it drastically reacts to terrorist violence.(4)

Even these suggestions offer only broad guidelines for the concerned news editor. What is excessive coverage and how can it be reduced? How can the media convince the reader/viewer that terrorism poses only a small threat? How can the abstract quality of remaining within legal parameters be demonstrated on television? How can the public be made aware that over-reaction poses a greater risk than any terrorist attack? These questions cannot be answered by the current body of knowledge.

Research Needs

Much research has already been completed on the problem of terrorism; most of it centers on categorizing the psychological profiles of potential

terrorists or on the risk probabilities associated with certain forms of high technology terrorism. While we now understand the goals, strategies and tactics of terrorism, it is not yet possible to adequately control the process of fear and over-reaction which terrorism initiates. More research and new research directions are in order.

First, researchers must investigate the different presentational approaches which the media might use in reporting terrorism. Second, they must delineate the relationship between these representations and public reaction. The media cannot adequately self-regulate without well developed theory supported by sound empirical research.

The media cannot be expected to provide uniform coverage of terrorism on the basis of "armchair" assumptions regarding the public's reaction to terrorist episodes. These reactions must be measured, correlated, and reported in a manner which explains how the media might avoid the inflammatory enhancement of terrorism. The media need specific procedural guidelines, not broad policy suggestions. It is the researcher's responsibility to provide this information to the mass media, and the media's reponsibility to act upon it.

CONCLUSIONS

The phrase responsible media seems appropriate to this discussion for two reasons. On the one hand, the media are largely responsible for the climate of fear which insures the over-reaction necessary for a terrorist victory. Yet on the other hand, a free and responsible mass media offer the best solution to reducing the effectiveness of terrorism.(25)

With all of the expertise which has developed on terrorism, a gap has also developed between theory and its application. The profiles of the typical skyjacker developed by psychologists have prevented hundreds of possible terrorist episodes.(7) Sociologists can now define many of the root causes of terrorism. It is time for the communication researchers to provide answers to the media requests for assistance in presenting terrorism more responsibly.

The best defense against the ultimate goals of terrorism is a democratic form of government; the best defense of democracy is always in the minds of men.(14) The social responsibility of the media is to self-regulate or face the prospect of severe governmental restriction born of a crisis reaction to terrorism. The media must strengthen the social fabric of democracy by explaining that terrorism is one of the costs associated with a libertarian from of government.(15)

Uncertainty over the specific nature of terrorism, or its potential for destruction, cannot justify delaying contingency planning. Nor can the mass media use the First Amendment as an excuse for irresponsible reporting motivated by pride or profit. Conversely, the government's reactive approach to terrorism is not only too late to prevent needless death and injury, but it also results in victory to the terrorist via increased repression and the erosion of civil liberties, including the right to a free press. "Prevention is not only better than cure, there may otherwise be little left to cure."(11)

There is no ultimate or final solution to terrorists in the U.S. To claim one exists is to oversimplify an extremely complex set of interactions. The cycle of terrorism, fear, over-reaction, repression, and eventually more terrorism must be broken. The mass media must dissolve their symbiotic relationship with the terrorists. This entails both cooperation with law

enforcement authorities and a more balanced and rational presentation of terrorism as news. The media must responsibly self-regulate, for while it is likely that terrorism is inevitable in a democratic society, its ultimate success in destroying that society is not.

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